

Retiree News

A Supplement to the Desert Airman

Friday, July 26, 2002

Notes to Know

Protecting medical records

The 355th Medical Group has tightened the control of medical records. The policy has always been that health records are the property of the United States Government and maintenance of the health records at the military treatment facility is required. In the past, patients were occasionally allowed to hand-carry or maintain their medical records despite USAF policies. When a patient has to see a civilian physician, copies of relevant medical data can be provided the physician given enough notice. If for some reason the entire record has to be copied, several weeks advance notice is needed and a charge may be involved. Copies for insurance companies, lawyers or personal use usually involve a charge.

RAO Volunteers wanted

Are you interested in volunteering with the Retiree Activities Office? If you have a few hours to spare, please call the RAO and let the volunteer know what you'd like to do. Volunteers are always needed in the pharmacies, the medical clinic and the RAO information desk. Other locations may have needs as well so let the volunteer know what you'd like to do.

If you call the RAO at 228-5100, send an e-mail to retired@dm.af.mil, write to Retiree Activities Office, 5345 East Madera Street, DMAFB, AZ 85707 or visit the RAO office: go south on Craycroft Road, turn right after the water tower onto Madera and 5345 is the third building (Building 4310) on the right. Volunteers normally man the desk from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Leave a message during any other time.

Sampson AFB Veterans

There is a Veterans Association, Inc for anyone who was ever assigned to Sampson AFB. The organization was established in 1994 and annual reunions are held in the northeast in addition to regional events and gatherings. For more information or

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Expired IDs cause problems

Payment for some TRICARE For Life claims were initially denied by TRICARE for individuals recorded as being ineligible for TRICARE in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Records System.

In many cases, these denials were based on family members who had "expired eligibility" in DEERS, meaning that their eligibility had not been re-verified in the last four years as required by DOD policy. Retirees need to update the system only when a change occurs (e.g., a move, divorce, marriage, birth of child).

Denied TRICARE claims for TFL beneficiaries with "expired eligibility" will be automatically reprocessed until August 1. Until then, beneficiaries and providers will not have to re-submit the denied claims.

After August 1, claims received for beneficiaries with expired eligibility will be denied until the eligibility information in DEERS is updated.

In other cases, Medicare beneficiaries have not given their Medicare Parts A and B information to DEERS. Remember that beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A only do not have

TRICARE as a benefit. If you're not sure, look at your Medicare card and it will tell you whether you have only Part A or Parts A and B.

To update ID cards and Medicare information, take your old ID card and/or Medicare card to Bldg. 3200, Customer Service Counter, 228-4425. They will check the DEERS system and prepare a new ID card if that is the problem. If you have other changes to make such as in marital status, a child who becomes an adult, a new baby, take the death, marriage and birth certificates with you. If you have changes that require reporting to DEERS, be sure and let your local TRICARE office know of the changes also. Call 512-1420, 1-888-874-9378 or 1-888-363-5433. You can also visit the TRICARE Service Center in Bldg. 417.

For more information about ID cards, call 1-800-361-2620. For more information, call the TRICARE Information Center at 1-800-363-5433 or visit the TRICARE Website at www.tricare.osd.mil.

(Excerpts from Army Echoes, May 2002 and Afterburner, May 2002)

Tricare program offers long term care

The open enrollment period for the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program began July 1 and lasts until December 31. Open season applications are available at <http://www.ltcfeds.com>. You can put your name on the mailing list to receive an open season information kit, including application, by calling 1-800-582-3337.

Long-term care is not medical care. Rather it is designed to help people who have chronic conditions perform daily living functions such as dressing, eating, and going to the bathroom. It also includes care needed if afflicted with

cognitive problems such as Alzheimer's disease. Care can be received at home, in a hospital, nursing home, assisted living facility, adult day care center or hospice.

Study any materials about long-term care insurance carefully. Check out plans offered by several companies and compare cost and coverage. You may find another plan fits your individual needs better than this one sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

(Afterburner, May 2002 and Retiree News, May 23, 2002, Military Personnel Center)

Potentially high benefits for drinking tea

The possible health benefits of tea are being studied. You might want to make tea a daily habit just for the potential health of it. Studies find that tea drinkers tend to have lower rates of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

What's the connection between tea and health? That's what researchers hope to discover as they continue to sort out the mystery

of tea's apparent health value and identify the many potential benefits this traditional drink may hold.

The role of tea in promoting health isn't a new idea. The Chinese have used tea in a medicinal fashion for 4,000 years. The many black,

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Updated numbers and base happenings

Blanchard Golf Course - 228-3734. Open for golf sunrise to sunset. After 9 a.m., golf for \$13.00 with and \$6 without a cart. After 3 p.m., unlimited golf is \$7 with a cart. The Eagles Nest Snack Bar is open daily from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. The grill closes at 3 p.m.

Bowling Center - 228-3461. Bowling for Bucks runs through August 31. Earn free passes to bowl and a chance to win prizes including up to \$500.

Commissary - 228-3116. The hours have changed to Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sat. - Sun., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Mini Mart is no longer open.

Community Center - 228-3717. Stormy's Cyber Café is open Mon. - Fri., 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Fitness Center - 228-4556. The new center is now open.

Information, Tickets, and Travel, 228-3700. ITT is located in the Community Center on 5th St., Bldg. 4201.

Library - 228-4381. The library is open Mon. - Thurs., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sundays and Holidays.

Officers Club - 748-0660 or 228-3301 and the **Enlisted Club** - 228-3100. The D-M clubs have coordinated their meal operations. The Officers Club hosts lunch Mon. - Fri., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., dinner Wed. - Sat., 5:30 to 8 p.m. and Sunday Brunch from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for both enlisted and officers. The Enlisted Club offers the Cabana Pizzeria, open to everyone. By Oct. Cabanas will be an indoor operation but will still provide take-out.

Outdoor Recreation - 228-3736 or 228-4491.

VA lowers Co-payment

December 6, a new regulation was put into effect that sets up a three-tier copayment system for outpatient care. Veterans who have been making copayments for outpatient health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs will have lower bills, and in some cases, no bills at all, under the new rules.

The first tier of the co-payment system is for preventive care visits and costs veterans nothing. This care includes flu shots, laboratory tests, certain radiology services, hepatitis C screening and numerous other services.

Primary care outpatient visits comprise the second tier and will require a copayment of \$15. The last tier includes specialty outpatient care, like outpatient surgery, audiology and optometry and will cost \$50.

The co-payments do not apply for the treatment of medical problems that are officially recognized as "service connected." For nonservice-connected conditions, the outpatient co-payments

apply primarily to veterans enrolled in Priority Group 7.

"This is great news for veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "It eliminates barriers for veterans to get the preventive care they need and will lower the cost of health care for many."

Effective February 4, the co-payment some veterans make for outpatient medications increased from \$2 to \$7 for each 30-day supply, with maximum annual out-of-pocket payment of \$840 for veterans in certain enrollment priorities.

The medication copayment applies to medications and over-the-counter medications (aspirin, cough syrup, vitamins, etc.) that are dispensed from a VA pharmacy on an outpatient basis for treatment of a nonservice-connected condition. Medication copayments are not charged for medications injected during a clinic visit or for medical supplies (syringes, alcohol wipes, etc.).

For more information on copayments or your eligibility for non-VA emergency care benefits, call 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) or obtain information on the internet at www.va.gov/health/elig.

(Spring 2002 Southern Arizona VA Health Care System Health Trends newsletter)

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- Have regular health check-ups and follow AMA and ACS guidelines for mammography and other cancer screenings
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Tea

Continued from Page 1

green and oolong teas on store shelves all have one thing in common – they're all made from the leaves of the bush *Camellia sinensis*. Green tea is produced when the fresh leaves of *C. sinensis* are dried and steamed immediately after being harvested.

Black tea is produced when the leaves are fermented and dried. The result of the process is a more robust flavor. Oolong tea is derived from partially fermented leaves that are then dried.

Whether you drink tea for its flavor or as a "pick-me-up," you're also getting something more.

Tea leaves from the *C. sinensis* bush are loaded with flavonoids, a type of antioxidant. The same generally does not apply to herbal teas because they are produced from other plant sources and not from the *C. sinensis* bush. Antioxidants are found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

It is thought they protect the body by neutralizing the by-products of your cells' normal metabolism (free radicals) that are believed to cause cellular damage.

Although not all studies have shown protective effects, the majority seem to indicate that

tea drinkers do reap cardiovascular benefits.

A study in the Netherlands involving more than 3,400 men and women found that severe atherosclerosis, the buildup of cholesterol-containing fatty deposits in the arteries, was 69 percent lower among those who drank four cups of tea daily. This possible protective benefit was most pronounced among women in the study.

Studies have also demonstrated that tea consumption can affect cholesterol levels – the more tea consumed, the lower your cholesterol. Flavonoids found in tea also may play a role in cancer prevention.

As with cardiovascular disease, the mechanism is uncertain.

Like coffee, regular tea does have caffeine. However, the amount of caffeine in a cup of tea is substantially lower than what's found in a standard cup of coffee.

For example, there are 135 milligrams of caffeine in 8 ounces of brewed coffee versus the 50 mgm found in black tea and 30 mgm in green tea. Decaffeinated tea contains only 2 mgm of caffeine.

Actual clinical trials done over long periods of time are lacking. Even so, for most people, there does appear to be more overall benefit to drinking tea than there is risk.

(Excerpts from a Mayo Clinic Health Letter article as printed in Pima Council on Aging's Never Too Late, April 2002.)

Notes

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to join, contact Chip Phillips at PO Box 331, Williamsville, NY 14231, call 1-716-633-1119, fax 1-716-633-9118, or e-mail chip34@aol.com.

Medical facility opens

The Ambulatory Health Care Facility addition to the 355th Medical Group building opened in early July. Flight Medicine, Physical Examinations, and the Blue, Copper and Silver panels occupy the new building. Pediatrics, Women's Health and Internal Medicine clinics will also be located in the new addition.

The Medical Group still offers the same services. The appointment desk and panel phone numbers remain the same. Medical records will be maintained by individuals respective panel.

The pharmacy, laboratory, surgical services, eye and orthopedic clinics remain in their current locations. The existing main clinic (Bldg. 400) will be reorganized for future consolidation of Medical Group functions that are spread out in buildings across the base.

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- Extreme thirst
- Frequent urination
- Drowsiness, lethargy
- Sugar in urine
- Sudden vision changes
- Increased appetite
- Sudden weight loss
- Fruity, sweet, or wine-like odor on breath
- Heavy, labored breathing
- Stupor, unconsciousness

For more information, write or call the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 120 Wall Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10005-4001, 1-800-533-CURE.

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